



# Digging DEEP to Discover What Matters to Student Success

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Charles Schroeder

Shaila Mulholland

Elizabeth Whitt

Jillian Kinzie



# Digging DEEP...

## Overview

- Introduction to the Session
- Project Background
- Research Approach
- Emerging Themes
- Next Steps



## Digging DEEP...

### Learning Outcomes

- Understanding of Project DEEP
- Insight into policies and practices of educationally effective institutions
- Understanding of potential student affairs applications of NSSE and DEEP and collaboration with academic affairs
- Ideas for new approaches to enhancing student learning and success



Digging DEEP...

## Advance Organizer

- How can we use what we know about educational effectiveness to improve undergraduate education?
- What kinds of information about educational effectiveness will you and your colleagues find compelling?



# Digging DEEP...

Warm-up:

What programs or practices best promote student learning at your institution?

Are there practices you're aware of that other institutions employ?

# Digging DEEP...

## Concerns

- Press for demonstrable impact
- High stakes environment
- Can't assume students are doing the things that lead to high levels of learning





## Lessons From The Research

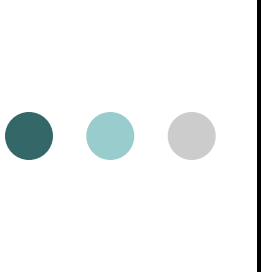
What do we know about students  
and effective educational  
environments?



## Lessons From The Research

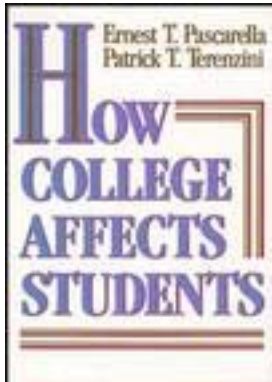
- What matters most to desired outcomes is what students do, not who they are
- A key factor for student learning is the quality of effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities





# What *Really* Matters in College: Student Engagement

**“The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved.”**



***Ernest T. Pascarella & Patrick T. Terenzini,  
How College Affects Students***



## Lessons From The Research

- **Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities**



## Two Components of Student Engagement

- What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things



# Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987)

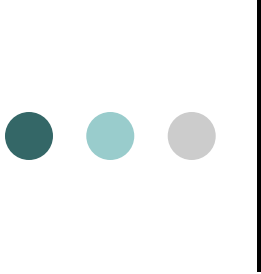
- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Respect for diverse learning styles
- Cooperation among students



# Principles for Good Practice in Student Affairs

(Blimling & Whitt, 1999)

- Engages students in active learning
- Helps students build coherent values and ethical standards
- Sets high expectations for learning
- Uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance
- Uses resources effectively to help achieve goals
- Forges partnerships that advance learning
- Builds supportive and inclusive communities



# National Survey of Student Engagement

*(NSSE -- pronounced “nessie”)*

**College student survey that  
assesses first-year and  
senior student engagement  
in activities associated with  
high levels of learning and  
development**



## National Survey of Student Engagement

- 3 years of data
- 265,000 students from 614 different colleges and universities have participated in NSSE
- 49 states



# **Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice**

**Academic  
Challenge**

**Student-  
Faculty  
Interaction**

**Enriching  
Educational  
Experiences**

**Active and  
Collaborative  
Learning**

**Supportive  
Campus  
Environment**





# Digging DEEP...

## **Purpose of Project DEEP**

Project DEEP aims to get beyond NSSE results, and offer a more in-depth picture of student engagement

The goal is to discover and describe different forms and conditions of student engagement and to document what institutions do and how they achieved this level of effectiveness, and then share these success stories to help other institutions transform





# Project DEEP Partners



National Survey of  
Student Engagement

The College Student Report



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



CENTER OF INQUIRY IN THE

**Liberal Arts**

---

AT WABASH COLLEGE



Digging DEEP...

## **Research Approach**

- 20 case studies
  - Team of 24 researchers review institutional documents and conduct multiple-day site visits
  - Observations of campus culture, individual and group meetings
  - Identification of effective practice and programs
- Roundtables conducted by AAHE to explore uses of NSSE data for improvement of student learning



## Digging DEEP...

### **Selection Criteria**

Controlling for student and institutional characteristics (i.e., selectivity, diversity, institutional type), DEEP schools have:

- Higher-than-predicted NSSE benchmark scores
- Higher-than-predicted graduation rates

Region and institutional type, special mission



Digging DEEP...

## **Project Status**

- 20 initial site visits completed
- Interim Reports to be reviewed by institutions
- Debriefing meetings conducted during second visits
- Identification of preliminary findings



## Lessons Learned...

### Campus Culture

- **Macalester College students, faculty and staff understand and articulate the College's core values of academic excellence, service, multiculturalism and internationalism. These values are enacted in the curriculum and co-curriculum.**



## Lessons Learned from DEEP schools

### **Campus Culture**

- **CSUMB is a public liberal arts institution with a distinctive curriculum and outcomes- based education model. Its “Vision Statement” is the driving force behind all decisions and actions taken at the institution.**



## Academic Challenge

**Fayetteville State provides an appropriate balance of academic challenge and support: “We are open admission, but not open graduation.”**





## Active and Collaborative Learning

- **Ursinus College's Common Intellectual Experience (CIE) is a two-semester course for first year students. Common readings and the "Uncommon Hour" provides opportunities for students to have a shared intellectual experience outside the classroom that complements class activities.**



## Student-Faculty Interaction

- **Wofford College's learning community courses connect first-year students, preceptors, and faculty both in-and out-of-class through weekly "pizza discussions" in the residence halls, off-campus excursions, and dinner discussions in the faculty dining room.**



## Student-Faculty Interaction

- **University of Kansas students constitute 20% of campus policy-making committees. Most classes (79%) have fewer than 30 students.**



# Student-Faculty Interaction

- **Longwood University faculty members serve as a student's advisor all four years. The advising philosophy is developmental and holistic; mentoring is a key component.**



## Enriching Educational Environment

- **The University of Maine, Farmington's Student Work Initiative employs students in meaningful work in student services, laboratories, and field-research. Such experiences provide opportunities to apply what they are learning to practical, real-life situations.**



## Enriching Educational Environment

- **George Mason University uses technology to enhance the learning environment through its Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC) program, which assists liberal arts students in achieving ten instructional technology goals.**



## Enriching Educational Environment

- **Sweet Briar College has a variety of ways for students to get involved in independent research projects: in-class group projects, summer research, senior thesis, and “mentoring research groups.”**



## Supportive Campus Environment

- **Wheaton College's First Year Seminar courses employ a “team” approach to assist new students in their transition to college. The team consists of the course professor, two trained student preceptors, a librarian, and an administrative mentor.**





# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution adopts a model of student affairs practice appropriate for its institutional culture and academic mission.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

Student success is enhanced when:

- Academic rigor is appropriately calibrated for the institution's mission and students.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution enacts a talent development philosophy.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution is open to innovation, and is committed to improvement.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

## **Next Steps In the Effective Practice Agenda**

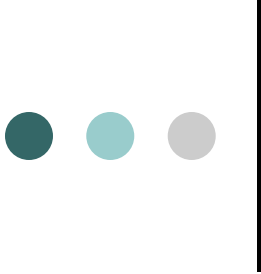
- NSSE and AAHE Support for Institutional Improvement
  - National roundtables
  - Campus consortia
- Nationally-disseminated monographs and policy briefs
- Workshops and presentations at national and regional meetings

# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

## The Effective Educational Practices Agenda

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- The NSSE Institute
- Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)
- Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS)





# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

## **Implications**

- Student Affairs application of NSSE and DEEP
- Collaboration with Academic Affairs



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

## Questions and Comments



For more information:

**[www.iub.edu/~nsse](http://www.iub.edu/~nsse)**



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

Student success is enhanced when:

- The institution adopts and enacts a talent development philosophy.
- Students have the skills needed to succeed academically.
- Instructors use effective, active and collaborative learning approaches.





# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

- The institution's mission is shared among students, faculty and staff.
- Units collaborate around student learning.
- Effective educational practices are used consistently throughout the institution.
- Academic rigor is appropriately defined for the institution.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

- Students perceive curricular experiences are relevant.
- Intentional connection of in- and out-of-class experiences.
- Clearly communicated course expectations and intended outcomes.
- Assessment that promotes student learning.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

- Institutional agents, preferred courses and programs of study, support services, and extracurricular activities are accessible.
- Students have regular contact with peers whose values and aspirations are compatible with the institution's educational purposes.
- Academic and social programs, policies, and practices are integrated and complementary.
- Students feel they belong and are valued as individuals.



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

## **Next Steps In the Effective Practice Agenda**

- NSSE and AAHE Support for Institutional Improvement
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## Academic Challenge

- **University of Michigan senior faculty members teach discipline-based frosh seminars for students in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts and introductory courses in the redesigned engineering program.**



## Academic Challenge

**Sewanee's Interdisciplinary Humanities Program includes four writing-intensive courses that introduce the cultural history of the western world. The program is team-taught using a mix of lectures and small discussion sections.**



## Active and Collaborative Learning

- **University of Texas at El Paso uses learning communities and course-based service learning and volunteerism to actively engage its mostly commuter, first-generation students.**





# Active and Collaborative Learning

- **California State University, Monterey Bay encourages students to use one another as resources to learn math in a course called “Math Huge.” The classes enroll anywhere from 60 to 90 students, but students engage in collaborative groups of 3 around a computer to problem solve with actual data sets.**



# Digging Deep to Discover What Matters to Student Success

## Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)



- To discover and document the programs, policies, and practices that successfully engage students in learning activities and lead to strong graduation rates.



## Supportive Campus Environment

- **In an effort to support the diverse needs of students, faculty at California State University, Monterey Bay are encouraged to accept multiple lines of evidence from students for the demonstration of a given course outcome clearly articulated up front. In this way, diverse students with different strengths can select the best way for them to satisfy an outcome.**